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Approved For Release 2000/08/29 : CIA-RDP79S01011A000800040020-6
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

31 October 1952

MEMORANDUM TO THE CONSULTANTS TO THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

SUBJECT: Project Longview: Probable Soviet Policy over the
Next Decade

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this project is to attempt to determine probable Soviet policy over the next decade. It is designed in particular to determine the date at which the Kremlin might initiate or provoke global war. It is designed primarily to assist US policy makers in the preparation of long-range plans.

This memorandum represents a few preliminary thoughts on this problem. Proper execution of this project would require data which are not, and will not be, available. We are dealing here with a group whose philosophy and whose view of the world is entirely different from our own. We are also confronted by a period in which the rapidity of change which has been a characteristic of modern history will almost certainly continue. We must also face an exceptional list of unknowns: for example, the likelihood of Stalin's death within the period of this estimate (he will be 73 in December), future developments throughout the non-Communist world, etc.

It is not clear yet just how this assignment is to be approached. It is probably not the type of problem for which the usual IAC apparatus is useful. Providing time is available, a great deal can probably be contributed by study of the limited evidence available on Soviet scientific, economic, and military programming and on Soviet military theory. However, fundamentally, this project can best be done through a combination of imagination, and of persistent, hard thinking about the ideas and forces which are basic to the Soviet system, to the Soviet view of the world, and to the fundamental elements involved in the East-West struggle.

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This project involves analysis of the pattern of Soviet thought, of the Soviet interpretation of the world, of the probable Soviet interpretation of the course of future events. One can prove almost anything by selections from the writings of the Communist leaders. However, I believe there are some ideas or attitudes as fundamental to the Communist approach to government and to international affairs, as some ideas are fundamental to the American or British approach. I have attempted, very hastily, to outline these and to state other theorems or aphorisms which apply to this problem.

II. PROBLEM

To determine probable Soviet policy over the next decade, with particular reference to determining the date at which the Kremlin might initiate or provoke general war.

DISCUSSION

A. SUGGESTED THEOREMS

1. The USSR is engaged in conflict now with the US and the West. In this conflict, the Kremlin is utilizing every technique but global war.
2. When two hostile power groups have reached positions such as those now occupied by the Soviet Bloc and the West, the likelihood of war sooner or later is very great.
3. The Kremlin is convinced by the Western rearmament effort, especially the rate of production of atomic weapons and the development of retaliatory air power, that the West is preparing to attack.

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4. It is difficult, if not impossible, for the Kremlin to be persuaded that the Western program is a defensive one designed to prevent Soviet attack and to ensure Western security against Soviet attack. This difficulty will increase, regardless of US efforts to explain its program.

5. The ultimate objective of the Kremlin is a Communist world controlled from Moscow. The principal immediate objectives of the Kremlin are to ensure the security of the Bloc, to isolate and discredit the US, and to divide and weaken the West.

6. The Kremlin believes that Communism constitutes the wave of the future. However, there is no timetable for the attainment of either immediate or long-range Soviet goals.

7. The Kremlin is well-informed concerning present US and Western capabilities and concerning their economic and military programs. (How the data are interpreted is another matter.)

8. The Kremlin seeks to avoid a frontal assault, at least until swift and complete victory is certain. Its emphasis is upon undermining, infiltrating, intimidating. It is cautious, and its strategy and tactics are flexible. It does not gamble, and it prefers not to use force until it believes that victory has been assured.

9. However, the Kremlin assumes that force must be used at some point to secure its triumph. Moreover, it maintains armed forces for exploiting any opportunity to expand its control. It is extremely sensitive and vigilant concerning developments which it considers actual or potential threats to its security.

10. The Kremlin would precipitate global war if it believed that victory, without widespread destruction within the Bloc, were assured.

✓ This raises some interesting questions. Does the Western program deter or provoke the Kremlin, or both? Is war less likely now than it was in 1947? Are the fundamental factors affecting the likelihood of global war in the future less threatening now than they were in 1947? Is there any way out of this dilemma?

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11. The Kremlin would initiate general war if it believed that foreign military attack were imminent and unavoidable, and that Soviet chances of surviving such an attack would be improved by seizing the initiative and attacking first.

12. The Kremlin believes that the West is decaying. The power and influence of the Western great powers in Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa will continue to decline. This will speed the disintegration and decay of the West.

13. The Kremlin believes that no grouping of states can survive the strains of modern political warfare unless it has the type of leadership and control which the Kremlin provides the Bloc.

14. The Kremlin believes that the US will remain hostile to the USSR, regardless of developments elsewhere in the world.

15. The economic power of the Bloc will continue to grow, both absolutely and relatively.^{1/} Throughout this period, the Bloc economy will be much better prepared to support a major war effort than it was in 1940 or than it is in 1952. Kremlin control over the Satellites will increase.

B. AMONG THE PRINCIPAL IMPOSSIBILITIES

16. Bloc capabilities, particularly with atomic weapons. Even if one restricts "war-gaming" to that involving the Kremlin estimate of probable developments, and not our own estimate, it is virtually impossible to estimate the probable development of Bloc capabilities. Research upon the economy, the scientific program, and the military scheduling may produce some data and some insight into the development and production of military equipment. New weapons and new series of weapons will certainly appear; some of these will probably revolutionize warfare as it is known in 1952.

17. Kremlin estimate of US and Western intentions. This has been noted earlier. There are many vital questions in this

^{1/} This raises a number of interesting questions: At what point does the Kremlin estimate that Bloc power will surpass that of the West? Does the Kremlin believe that the balance of power and the diplomatic initiative have passed (temporarily or permanently) to the Kremlin? Is the Bloc encircled, or is capitalism encircled?

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field, including the following: Does the Kremlin believe that the West will not attack the Bloc within the foreseeable future because the US will not be able to acquire complete control over the West, and because Western unity is going to decline, rather than to increase? Does the Kremlin believe that there will be wars between the capitalist states before the capitalists attack the Bloc? Does the Kremlin believe that historical forces control Western policy?

18. Stability and unity of the West. One of the principal immediate objectives of the Kremlin is to divide and weaken the West. The Kremlin probably estimates that it can divide the West, but we cannot estimate whether it believes that this can be accomplished within the next decade. There are wide degrees of division, and the Kremlin may even believe that a West temporarily free of some of its allies would be stronger, while the Kremlin might not be able to add those states to its own empire. Moreover, the Kremlin may estimate that it can destroy NATO, but that this achievement would be roughly balanced by the revival of an alliance system of another kind, possibly with other states (India, e. g.) added and by the growth in power of individual Western states (the US and West Germany, e. g.).

19. Germany and Japan. Preventing the rearmament of West Germany and Japan, weaning them away from the West, and integrating them into the Bloc are fundamental Kremlin objectives. We cannot estimate for a period of a decade the courses of action the Bloc will follow to attain these objectives. We must first face the question — probably too boldly stated — that we cannot now estimate whether or when the Kremlin would initiate general war to prevent the rearmament of these countries and their unification with the West. We cannot say, either, whether or not the Kremlin has decided or ever will decide that it cannot precipitate global war or even take serious risk of global war so long as these states and their power are not a part of the Bloc.

20. Sino-Soviet Relations.

21. Consolidation vs. Expansion

22. Influence of long-term social developments within the USSR, Soviet nationalism, etc.

23. Soviet military theory.

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CONCLUSIONS

1. When two hostile power groups have reached positions such as those now occupied by the West and the Bloc, the likelihood of war sooner or later is very great. This likelihood is increased by the fact that both groups recognize the situation and, in attempting to ensure their own security, increase the danger of war.
2. There is no timetable according to which immediate or long-term Soviet goals must be achieved.
3. The Bloc will continue its efforts to increase its economic and military power.
4. Throughout this decade, the Bloc will, at the least, maintain continuous heavy military and political pressure against the West. If the West continues to develop its unity, strength, and resolution, the Bloc will attempt to undermine that program and to profit from any Western errors and from the difficulties caused by the Western program. If the West should relax its efforts, the Bloc will seek to expand its influence and control.
5. The Kremlin would precipitate global war if it believed that victory, without widespread destruction within the Bloc, were assured.
6. The Kremlin would initiate general war if it believed that foreign military attack were imminent and unavoidable, and that Soviet chances of surviving such an attack would be improved by seizing the initiative and attacking first.
7. We believe that the Kremlin is unlikely to precipitate global war in 1953. We believe it would be unsafe to estimate that the Kremlin would not precipitate global war at any time beyond 1953.

Page 7, para. 13: Finally, it is always possible that individual members of the Western alliance, including the US, will pursue policies which impair the cohesion of the alliance. For example, British Commonwealth policy in the Far East is basically at odds with that of the US, while France tends more and more to interpret her NATO cooperation in terms of support for her policy in overseas possessions, and moreover, is leath to sanction a fully sovereign, armed, [anti-communist] West German government. In addition, a resurgent West Germany eventually striving to recover lost German territory might create severe conflicts within the North Atlantic Alliance.



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2. So far as can now be seen, this war situation state of
limited hostilities will almost ^{may} certainly continue and progressively
increase in intensity throughout the period of this estimate, and
in the event that a global war does not develop, will be the
dominant factor in the world situation. The Soviet rulers

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9. Present trends suggest that indigenous Communist movements will not succeed in capturing power in any European country during the coming decade. ^{Europe} Production and productive capacity will increase, although at a slower percentage rate than in the Bloc.

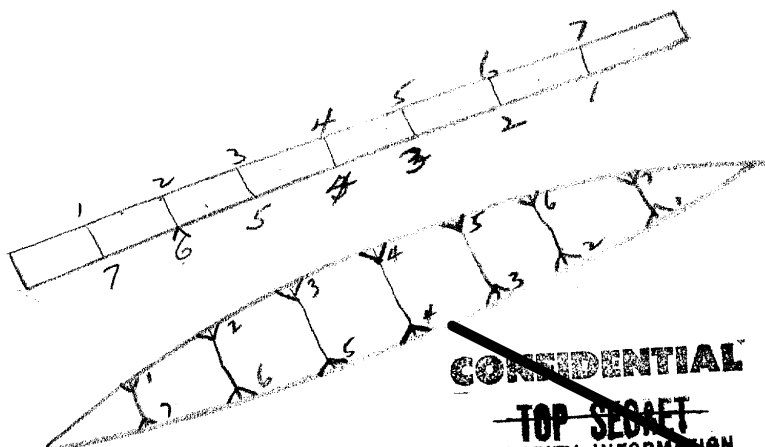
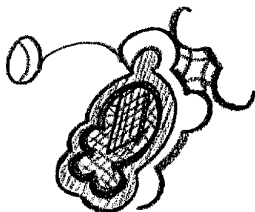
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Paragraph 16

16. If the Kremlin should estimate that the Bloc had attained a clear preponderance over the West, and that such a war could be undertaken with [reasonable] assurance of success, it would probably adopt aggressive sources of action involving grave risk of general war, and it might deliberately initiate general war. Conversely, it is possible that the USSR might initiate general war as a preventive action if it became convinced, either rightly or wrongly, that an irreversible a dominant unfavorable shift in the balance of power was developing that this. If such a shift constituted a grave threat to the security of the Bloc, or to the eventual attainment of Soviet objectives of world domination that it could not be countered without recourse to general war, then the Soviets would almost certainly choose such a course.



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Add this sentence to end of paragraph 8 :

make available
Nevertheless, the total industrial capacity, which the West can
use for ~~its~~ military purposes will exceed that of the Bloc
for the period of this estimate.

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R - State
18 Dec 52
JAC
not only

A situation of worldwide conflict — political and economic, but military as well — of a character and on a scale without close historical precedent now exists between the two power blocs led by the USSR and the US.

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1. A situation of intense conflict--ideological, political, but military as well--of a character and on a scale without close historical precedent now exists between the two power aggregations headed by the USSR and by the US.

Couldnt we
include foreword
in lieu of covering
letter?

This is per in the old
than the best appraisal
poss it wd be useful
been done in full
reason that sum total
of our info

coming
our best edited pieces
+ reps in am
news of the
JAL

The year of danger is the year in which
we lose our shirt (eg)

- 1 we have lost our allies &/or
- 2 we have got so hopelessly behind in
relative ^{mil} capabilities we can
ever catch up.
- 3 Bearing on 1 & 2 we are hopelessly
outclassed in P/W caps.
- 4 we get into a war wh in our terms is a dead loss
(no matter what the outcome)

You approach the concept of the loss of the shirt by looking at two extremes
+ The area close to these extremes.

Extreme No 1

Our defense capabilities fall apart.
The alliance blows up.
US goes isolationist (Hoover et al)

Extreme No 2

Our defense caps become large + to the
Kremlin are about to become dangerous.
(Note our defense move appear to the
Kremlin in 3 parts -

- a - pure mil + pol defense as
Nato forces + caps in Europe
- b - impure mil defense as

in the case of our
"retaliatory" air power
c pure offensive pol warfare
as per J. F. Dulles.

Kremlin could + would prob feel able
to pool up with (a)

Kremlin would regard (b + c) as
dangerous.

SK
~~Longview~~

I ~~the~~ gather that Iran is to be discussed
today, before Sen. Bull returns to W?

He's really here for Longview -
Iran not scheduled at all

By "war situation" we mean ^{the existing} a situation of worldwide conflict - not only political and economic, but also military ^{as well} - of a ^{which now exists} character and on a scale without close historical precedent, ~~now existing between the~~ ^{which is} ~~reluctant~~ ^{now}